

NAS Brunswick Environmental Legacy Important Part of Closure Plan

Work to Clean Up Base Continues at Brisk Pace

WHEN NAVAL AIR Station (NAS) Brunswick closes in 2011, more than 3,200 acres of storied land will be available for redevelopment.

Located in environmentally diverse coastal Cumberland County, Maine, the station consists of the 3,157-acre main base and several noncontiguous sites totaling nearly 220 acres in nearby towns. NAS Brunswick was included in the Department of Defense's Base

Commanding Officer, Captain Will Fitzgerald. This focus on environmental stewardship is nothing new. With the identification of NAS Brunswick as a Superfund site in the early 1980s, the station has taken seriously its role in environmental remediation.

Superfund is the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) program to clean up the nation's uncontrolled

to this clean up, it is a process that has been better served with public participation. Transparency is always good; in the world of environmental clean up, transparency is essential. All stakeholders must trust each other that compliance and remediation will always be in accordance with applicable laws and regulations.

In addition to a dedicated Navy team, the collaborative effort includes active

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—Captain Will Fitzgerald, NAS Brunswick Commanding Officer

Realignment and Closure (BRAC) Commission's 2005 action with closure scheduled for May 2011.

For personnel working towards closure, a vital component of the base's legacy is environmental stewardship. "There's nothing more important than ensuring that the land the Navy inherited in 1943 is left in an improved environmental condition for coming generations," says

hazardous waste sites. Past practices at NAS Brunswick, while acceptable generations ago, resulted in contamination in the soil, groundwater, and sediment at certain areas of the base. In total, 26 sites and areas of concern have been, or are being, investigated and remediated.

The effort to clean up NAS Brunswick is a long and complex one. And while the Navy and the base are committed

participation by the NAS Brunswick Restoration Advisory Board (RAB) which was formed in the 1980s. The RAB includes representatives of the Navy, community, state and federal regulators, the local redevelopment authority and a local citizen's group. For the past several years, NAS Brunswick produced informative semi-annual newsletters and maintained a public web site to keep the public informed and aware of the

issues, challenges and progress of remediation efforts.

After years of working on environmental remediation, there's plenty to tell. With a dedicated team of professionals, clean up efforts have accelerated following the base closure announcement in 2005. These cleanup efforts are prioritized based on environmental concerns and post-closure redevelopment plans. In the past few months alone, NAS Brunswick has accomplished the following tasks:



The Navy Exchange Gas Service Station removal action included the former location of the fuel pumping island, three underground storage tanks, and an additional area downgradient from the tanks. Over 7,400 tons of soil were recycled at an asphalt batching facility.

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- Implemented an accelerated effort of investigation and remediation while using innovative technologies, which has resulted in immediate total cost savings of over \$775,000 and an estimated long-term cost savings of at least three million dollars.
 - Moved rapidly from project development to completion in order to complete the remediation at the NAS Brunswick Navy Exchange Gas Station within a 6-month span at a cost savings of over \$530,000.
 - Completed an extensive evaluation followed by the installation and operation of an advanced oxidation system to treat 1,4-dioxane and solvent-contaminated groundwater with 28 million gallons of treated water being recycled annually.
 - Completed the major excavation and restoration of a former NAS Brunswick landfill site, resulting in the removal and disposal of over 42,000 tons of ash-contaminated soil and debris.
 - Transitioned quickly from work plan development to fieldwork implementation at eight sites to complete investigations and remediation before the end of a short Maine field season, saving \$85,000 in contract costs.
 - Initiated a third five-year review, which studies current remedial efforts to ensure they remain protective to human health and the environment.
- Additionally, other base environmental-related initiatives include the following:
- Working with state regulators to finalize a strategy for completing Resource Conservation and Recovery Act closure certification for 237 buildings by base closure in May 2011.
 - Drafting a Finding of Suitability to Lease for two buildings on base as well as finalizing a license for the reuse of two other buildings
 - Preparing for public hearings for an Environmental Impact Statement which will be completed this year, allowing for property transfer prior to base closure.
 - Reviewing a draft Historical Radiological Assessment (HRA) which will be finalized prior to base closure.

This is the first time that the Navy will complete an HRA for a BRAC base prior to closure.

- Completing Spill Prevention, Control, and Countermeasure closures of dozens of aboveground storage tanks, and initiating the closure of the NAS Brunswick fuel farm (including two 880,000-gallon jet propellant fuel storage tanks) and several remaining underground storage tanks, bringing the base below the thresholds for a Facility Response Plan and eliminating environmental liabilities.
- Conducting several base “walkabouts” where Sailors canvassed remote parts of the base to remove debris, further enhancing the base’s environmental legacy for future redevelopment.

“As the Commanding Officer, I am proud of the commitment to environmental stewardship of the Sailors and civilian employees of the base,” states Captain Fitzgerald. “Their dedication and efforts are paying off—we’ve seen favorable data showing that our mitigation and communication strategies are working, and our aggressive environmental programs have helped to promote the turnover and redevelopment of the base.”



An EPA and Maine Department of Environmental Protection sampling team assists with water sampling to help define groundwater and surface water interface. The team was challenged by the marshy conditions and rain storms.
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because NAS Brunswick is closing, it does not mean we stop caring about the environment; quite the contrary.” He added that there is still plenty of work to be done before the base officially closes in May of 2011. “Our environmental legacy depends on our continued diligence and teamwork, and we are committed to it,” concludes Captain Fitzgerald.

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Additionally, for the last three years NAS Brunswick has been recognized with a Chief of Naval Operations (CNO) Environmental Award, including the Restoration Award for the last two years. As the CNO, Admiral Gary Roughhead stated, “What happens in our environment cannot be dealt with at some later date, it must be addressed now and we must keep it on our minds constantly.”

“We at NAS Brunswick keep the CNO’s sentiment in mind each day; it is truly part of our ethos,” says Fitzgerald. “Just

To read more about the environmental restoration program at NAS Brunswick, visit <http://nasbrunswick.navy-env.com/index.htm>. 

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